

# 10 BIG IDEAS



TALENTED  
GIFTED AND

*that can  
increase the  
challenge level for  
high-achieving  
students  
in*

**Social  
Studies**

# Rationale

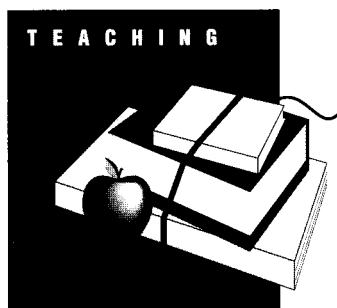
Thousands of gifted and talented young people and adolescents sit in classrooms across the state. Decades of research demonstrate that learning needs of gifted and talented students go beyond what is traditionally provided in regular classrooms. The nature of their abilities and talents, demonstrated or latent, require differentiated learning opportunities to help them realize their potential.

Connecticut educators genuinely care about *all* of their students and seek to meet the incredibly diverse learning needs of the students they face daily. Too often, however, classroom teachers do not have the tools, information, or support they need to meet these needs—particularly those of their gifted and talented students.

*Connecticut educators genuinely care about all their students and want to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse learners in their classrooms.*

Still, the responsibility for increasing the challenge level for gifted and talented students and for providing them with expanded learning opportunities rests largely with the classroom teacher.

This series of brochures is designed to provide classroom teachers, as well as teachers of the gifted and talented, with a number of practical ideas and resources for refining and expanding learning options to better meet these needs. The strategies were selected because they are inexpensive and readily adaptable by teachers. Although the 10 strategies listed here do not replace the powerful services of a full-time enrichment specialist and program for the gifted, we hope that all teachers will use the strategies systematically and that, over time, their use will lead to an increasing array of high-level learning options for gifted and talented students in Connecticut.



# Great Links

**National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)** ([www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org)) This website is extensive. The home page is a gateway to hundreds of pages of teacher resources in history, politics and government, geography, anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. One link on the home page is dedicated to the social studies standards (e.g., culture, individual identity and development, global connections). Browsers who visit each theme are provided with links to Internet resources that support each standard.

## History Matters

(<http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/>)

This website is designed for high school and college teachers of U.S. history survey courses. It is a gateway to web resources and offers unique teaching materials, first person primary documents and threaded discussions on teaching U.S. history. Many Pasts, one of the links, provides browsers with inspiring descriptions of research-based projects that have been completed by students. "What Did You Do in the War, Grandma?" was conducted by 17 Rhode Island students. They interviewed 36 Rhode Island women who recalled their lives in the years before, during and after WWII.

## The Connecticut Historical Society

(<http://www.chs.org>) The Connecticut Historical Society, located in Hartford, maintains a noteworthy website. The home page links to a variety of pages including History Day, museums, historical fact sites, and its library which houses 100,000 volumes, 3,000,000 manuscripts, and over 200,000 photographs, prints and drawings of Connecticut people, places and events. Teachers must visit this website and contact the staff in Hartford who are eager to help teachers and students with any aspect of historical research (860) 236-5621.

## History/Social Studies Website for K-12 Teachers

(<http://www.excepcpe.com/>)

This award winning website contains enormous amounts of information about a variety of social studies topics. Designed to help teachers locate and use the resources of the Internet in the classroom, the home page has a menu of over 30 choices including, for example: archeology, genealogy, humanities, news and current events, economics, research and critical thinking, government, religion, and philosophy.

## American Memory Historical Collections (<http://memory.loc.gov/>)

The American Memory Historical Collection, a major component of the National Digital Library Program, are multimedia collections of digitized documents, photographs, recorded sound, moving pictures and text. There are over 70 collections and some investigate themes such as elections, immigration, inaugurations, presidents and women pioneers.

**1** Teach students the critical thinking skills required in the study of history, as well as the other branches of the social sciences. For example, in history, ensure that students can: separate facts from opinion, evaluate the credibility of a source, determine the grounds for claims and evaluate the strength of an argument.

**2** Provide students with an opportunity to probe the different sides of enduring historical and social issues such as, for example, garbage, waste and the environment; immigration policy; crime and capital punishment; war and weapons of mass destruction; and human rights. Require that students compare, contrast and debate opposing viewpoints. A suggested series is *Opposing Viewpoints*, published by Greenhaven Press (800) 231-5163 ([www.greenhaven.com](http://www.greenhaven.com)). Greenhaven Press publishes over 80 volumes that cover nearly every controversial, contemporary topic. Their *Current Controversies* series covers current national and international issues. Each anthology mirrors the mosaic of opinions encountered in society and contains a wide spectrum of primary source documents.

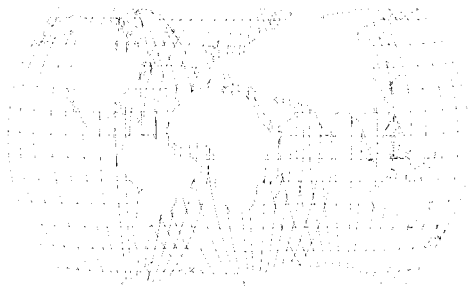
**3** Incorporate instructional strategies that engage students with historical time periods, such as simulations, role playing, and reenactments. Interact offers teachers hundreds of simulations categorized by grade level and content area. [(800) 359-0961; [www.interact-simulations.com](http://www.interact-simulations.com)]

**4** Ensure that students can write well-organized and thoughtful persuasive essays and articulate compelling oral arguments ([www.forensicsonline.com](http://www.forensicsonline.com)).

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**5** Explore the discoveries and inventions that have changed thinking and history. Some examples include: maps, mapmaking, and their role in exploration; photography and the printing press and their ability to preserve the past; the railroads and their ability to bridge people and continents; telescopes and their ability to see into the past and future. A suggested website is Teaching About Turning Points in History. The site provides teachers with strategies and resources to encourage students to think critically about turning points in history and to conduct research about historically significant topics that interest them. (<http://www.thehistorynet.com>)

**6** Include the study of biographies. Study men and women who have been influential within the context of their historical time period such as, for example: Thomas Jefferson, Tecumseh, John Muir, Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Margaret Mead and Golda Meir. Extend to all students an opportunity to study, write about and analyze the legacy of these individuals.



**7** Teach students the methodology of history and other social sciences. For example, students need to know how to read and interpret primary source documents, how to conduct oral histories, and how to analyze, monitor and invest in the stock market.

**8** Incorporate opportunities for students to explore, in-depth, topics of their choice. Teach students to web their topics so that they can see the connections between their topic and all of the social sciences.

**9** Encourage students to participate in contests and competitions, such as History Day, a competition that requires students to engage in historical research about a topic of interest ([www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/](http://www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay/)). Other contests and competitions are listed in *All the Best Contests for Kids* (5th edition) by Joan Bergstrom and Craig Bergstrom and *The Ultimate Guide to Student Contests, Grades 7-12* by Scott Pendleton. Contests and competitions are listed and described in both books by grade level and content areas.

**10** Provide students who are passionate about history or other areas of the social sciences with opportunities to pursue their interests through community resources or mentors.